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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
21 August 1968

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Reactions of Communist States and Parties to
the Military Entry into Czechoslovakia
(as of 1630 hours)

1. The reactions of European Communist states and parties were as expected. The Eastern European participants in the military move echoed the Soviet rationale for intervention. The first Polish announcement said the intervention was at the request of Czechoslovak "party and government leadership." This was later altered to read "party and state activists."

2. In Rumania, a joint session of party and government officials and representatives of mass organizations issued a communiqué on 21 August which expressed full solidarity with the Czechoslovak people and the Czechoslovak Communist party. The communiqué bluntly stated that "nothing can justify" armed intervention against Czechoslovakia which it described as a "flagrant violation of national sovereignty."

3. Following the joint session, Rumanian party and state chief Nicolae Ceausescu made a highly nationalistic speech and condemned the action of the Warsaw Pact five. Ceausescu appealed to the populace to be calm and firm but vigilant, and ready "at any moment to defend our socialist fatherland, Rumania." Ceausescu announced the establishment of Worker-Peasant Guard units.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence.

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4. In Yugoslavia, Tito spoke more softly than Ceausescu, probably because of concern that unrest might be sparked in Yugoslavia by the Russian action. Tito merely expressed "concern" over the violation of Czechoslovakia's sovereignty. The details of the Yugoslav position probably will be developed tonight during a meeting at Tito's vacation headquarters on Brioni Island.

5. The Italian and French Communist parties lost no time in denouncing the invasion. The Politburo of the Italian party issued a communiqué which was broadcast over Rome domestic service at 7:00 AM EDT on 21 August. It said that the leading bodies of the Italian Communist Party had received the decisions of Cierna and Bratislava with great satisfaction and "the Politburo now finds it incomprehensible that the grave decision of a military intervention was taken. The Politburo expresses the emotion and the very great concern which, at this moment, besets the workers' movement and reaffirms its solidarity with the actions of renovation carried out by the Czechoslovak Communist Party."

6. French Communist Party leaders issued a statement expressing "surprise and censure" of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. It noted that the party had advocated that problems arising between Communist parties should be examined and solved by means of "fraternal discussions during bilateral and multilateral meetings which respect each country's sovereignty and each party's self-determination." The statement pointed out that the party had already expressed its opposition to any military intervention from outside. In a sop to Moscow, however, the French Communists also indicated that the Czechs should take action against "anti-Socialist elements" in order to protect Socialist gains. The party Politburo is convening an emergency session of the Central Committee.

7. Of the Asian Communists, only the North Vietnamese have reacted publicly. A statement on Hanoi's domestic radio service on 21 August was an unequivocal and usually prompt endorsement. It described the Soviet move as a "noble effort" in

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response to a request from the "party faithful" in Czechoslovakia. The action, it said was sanctioned by recent agreements among the six Communist countries at Bratislava, and was necessitated by domestically inspired "counterrevolutionary" activities in Czechoslovakia.

8. This reaction is in marked contrast to Hanoi's heretofore neutral propaganda treatment of Soviet-Czech differences and was obviously dictated by North Vietnam's heavy dependence on Soviet supply.